



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



THE WORKS OF LASLETT JOHN POTT.



CONSIDERING it is but a few years, comparatively, since Mr. Pott began to exhibit, and that his pictures are also few relatively (he has rarely shown more than one each year) he has been very fortunate in attracting the notice of the public generally, and in gaining the favourable opinion of those whose duty or

business it is to pass under review the works seen in our public galleries. This painter was born, in 1837, at the picturesque town of Newark, Nottinghamshire, a place which is not unknown in the records of our national history. The castle, of which only the ruins now remain, is famous as the scene of many historical events, and is supposed to have been built by King Egbert, but was afterwards almost entirely rebuilt by Bishop Alexander in the reign of Stephen. At Newark, King John died in 1216, and it was there Cardinal Wolsey halted with his princely retinue on his way to Southwell. During the civil

wars of Charles I. it sustained three successive sieges, in 1643, 1644, and 1645; in 1646 Charles ordered the governor to surrender the castle and town to the Scottish army, when the former was entirely dismantled. In the parish church—one of the largest in the kingdom—is a picture of 'The Raising of Lazarus,' by W. Hilton, R.A., a gift from the artist, whose father was a native of the town, to the corporation.

Instances are very rare where a love of Art does not show itself in early life, and Mr. Pott's childhood proved no exception to the rule. One who knew him then intimately informs me that at the age of five he remembers to have often seen him seated on a tall, high-backed chair, amusing himself and delighting his friends by drawing hunting scenes and marine views, though quite unable to sharpen his pencils. These juvenile productions, my informant says—he has one of them in his possession at this far-off date—would scarcely have done discredit to a trained draughtsman. When the young



Charles I. leaving Westminster Hall after his Trial.

artist was a little older he attempted to copy oil pictures; but his father had other views for him, and caused his son, when at the age of sixteen, to be articled to an architect in the country. Here his artistic taste found but slight encouragement from either master or mystery; and at last the drudgery of "styles, examples, cusps, and columns," &c., so wearied him that his father consented to his coming to London, where he entered the well-conducted Art-school of Mr. Carey. Subsequently he placed himself as a pupil with Mr. Alexander Johnstone, whose name appeared a few years ago in this series of illustrated

biographical sketches; and he was studying with him when he produced the first pictures exhibited in the Royal Academy, 'Effie Deans' and 'Studying from Nature.' His next year's contribution, 'Dark and Fair,' did not escape the notice of the critic of the *Art Journal*, who spoke of it as "a good picture of its class." In 1862 Mr. Pott did not exhibit, but in the following year he sent 'Puss in Boots,' a work which, though of no exceptional merit, fairly won the honourable place—on the line—to which the hangers assigned it. The scene gives to the spectator a peep among the properties of a Christmas pantomime:

the clown gossiping with Columbine between the slips, and a man putting the mask of a gigantic pussy-cat on the head of a little child—an incident from which, as may be assumed, the composition takes its name.

A work of a far higher character as to subject than any the artist had hitherto produced appeared in the Academy in 1864; it was entitled, 'Rebecca describes the Fight to Ivanhoe,' and illustrates a passage from Scott's romance which says: "'And I must lie here like a bedridden monk,' exclaimed Ivanhoe, 'while the game that gives me freedom or death is played out by the hand of others! Look from the window once again, kind maiden, but beware you are not marked by the archers beneath.'" The design of the picture is quite in harmony with the spirit of the text, as is also the expression given to both the figures; the execution is very careful. Of Mr. Pott's 'Old Memories,' the only picture he sent to the Academy in 1865, we have no distinct recollection; in 1866 he was absent; but in the next year he contributed 'The Defence,' of which an engraving, on steel, appeared in the *Art Journal* of 1869 (*old series*), where the painting

is fully described. Of the two works he exhibited at the Academy in 1868 'The First Success' is the more attractive, the subject being pleasing, though simple in itself: a little girl, who has been playing the part of a fairy in some dramatic representation, is seen running off the stage, laden with the bouquets her admirers have showered down upon her. In the other picture of the year, 'The Minuet,' the attitude of the dancer is too overdone to be agreeable.

In 1869 the Royal Academy removed from Trafalgar-square to the more commodious galleries in the fine building the Society had erected for its purposes in Piccadilly. The visitor who, when the annual exhibition of that year opened, "began at the beginning" in the examination of the pictures, would have had his attention aroused at the very outset by a painting from the pencil of Mr. Pott, marked No. 2 in the catalogue, and bearing the title of 'A Fire at a Theatre.' By the way, the artist seems to have had, about this period of his career, a taste for theatrical representations of a certain kind. This unrehearsed scene in an ideal tragedy brought the painter very prominently



His Highness in Disgrace.

before the public; the subject was unusual, and there was enough sentiment in the treatment of it, though of a rather melodramatic kind, to interest the majority of spectators. Some of the actors are making their escape from the burning edifice: for example, the clown rushes through the flames with a child in his arms, while its mother, herself one of the theatric company, frantic with joy at the rescue of her little one, is undoubtedly a piece of acting dictated by Nature though not according to the rules of the stage.

The next work Mr. Pott sent to the Academy was 'Mary Queen of Scots led to Execution'; it was exhibited in 1871. Most of our readers, it may be presumed, will remember this clever and very touching composition from the large engraving on steel we gave of the picture in May, 1875. Another historical subject, 'CHARLES I. LEAVING WESTMINSTER HALL AFTER HIS TRIAL,' was contributed to the exhibition of the Academy in the year next following; an engraving of it appears on the preceding page. The records of the last days of the unfortunate monarch mention the indignities he suffered on these

occasions (he was brought three times before his self-constituted judges) and his quiet submission to the insults of his enemies. "In going through the hall, the soldiers and rabble were instigated to cry out 'Justice and execution!'" They reviled him with the most bitter reproaches; one miscreant presumed to spit in the face of his sovereign; but he patiently bore all their insolence. "Poor souls," cried he, "they would treat their generals in the same manner for sixpence." Singularly enough, Sir John Gilbert, R.A., exhibited in the adjoining room in the Academy, in the same year, a picture of the very same subject; and though the manner in which the two compositions were treated differed widely, the work of Mr. Pott well maintained its place by comparison with that of the older and more practised painter. His figure of Charles is dignified and kingly in its bearing; the motley group of Roundhead assailants seem in every way suited to the occasion. Even the guard of Parliamentary soldiers appointed to escort him from Westminster to St. James's Palace, whither he had been brought from Windsor to take his trial, show as little sympathy with the

monarch as the rabble who jeer and scoff at him. With this painting the artist exhibited a second, 'Shakspeare reading before Queen Elizabeth,'—a work which at the time was noticed in the pages of this Journal with commendation.

A presumed episode in the first Napoleon's ill-fated invasion of Russia in the year 1812, was the subject of a picture Mr. Pott sent to the Academy in 1873; it was called 'ON THE MARCH FROM MOSCOW,' and is made one of our illustrations. At the head of perhaps the largest and finest army that ever left France, Napoleon entered the territories of the northern emperor, and penetrated as far as Moscow, in spite of every resistance. But there his triumphs ended. He thought to make the ancient capital of the kingdom the winter-quarters of himself and his army, but the patriotism of the Russians defeated all his plans; they set fire to the city, and destroyed it to an extent that rendered it useless as a place of refuge during a winter of almost unprecedented severity, not only there, but over nearly the whole of Europe. The invaders were forced to retreat; cold and

famine destroyed them by thousands, and a miserable relic only of a magnificent army returned home to tell the sad tale of their misfortunes and sufferings. An anecdote the writer of this notice met with and transcribed when a boy at school, may be related here; it is to the following effect.

At the time when the army perished in the snows of Russia, a French woman, said to be of respectable family, was so deeply affected by the calamities of her country and her melancholy apprehensions of its future state, that she lost her reason, put on widow's weeds, and wandered about Paris bewailing the fate of her unfortunate countrymen. "Dressed in deep sable," the narrative says, "she may still be seen almost daily in the Champs Elysées in the same state of mental alienation, and the Parisians, who rarely allow either national or individual sorrow to deprive them of a joke, have long since christened her 'the Widow of the Great Army.' The history of this unhappy lady was made the subject of a short but very spirited and wild poem, by some anonymous writer: the words of which she



On the March from Moscow.

is supposed to have uttered when the allied armies first invaded France, in 1814. The opening stanzas are these:—

"Half a million of heroes! I saw them all.
Oh God! 'twas a sight of awful delight
To gaze on that army, the glory of Gaul!
As it rolled in its fierceness of beauty forth,
Like a glittering torrent, to deluge the earth!"

"The war-horses' tramp shook the solid ground,
While their neighings, Aha! and the dread Hurrah
Of the myriad mass made the skies resound,
As the invincible chief, on his milk-white steed,
Onward galloped, the host to lead.

"Sword, sabre, and lance, of thy chivalry, France
And helmet of brass, and the steel cuirass,
Flashed in the sun as I saw them pass;
While day by day, in sublime array,
The glorious pageant rolled away.

"Where are ye now, ye myriads? Hark!
Oh, God! not a sound! They are stretched on the ground,
Silent and cold, and stiff and stark.
On their ghastly faces the snows still fall,
And one winding-sheet enwraps them all!"

Mr. Pott's picture suggests, very impressively and pathetically, what the survivors of that terrible campaign had to endure as they retreated homewards: the broken line of soldiers, footsore and weary, is presented with evident knowledge of the means whereby strong effect may be produced; the little drummer-boy mounted on the back of a tender-hearted veteran is a touching feature in the composition. We do not think the artist has ever surpassed this picture in genuine expression and strong appeal. He exhibited with it at the Academy another work in which the predominant sentiment is also pathos, "Prince Arthur and Hubert:" a small replica of it, with some alterations, was engraved as one of our large plates in the volume for 1873.

Another subject from French history painted by Mr. Pott appeared at the Academy in 1874; it was called simply 'Paris, 1793;' both the place and the date are suggestive of horrors which have scarcely been surpassed in the annals of any nation, and this picture illustrates one out of a vast number of similar scenes then enacted. Two unhappy victims are about to be offered in sacrifice at the shrine of *Liberté*, and are being drawn

to the guillotine for that purpose—a dismal subject, which, however meritoriously represented, one does not care to linger over. Still communing with the dark side of human life, he sent as a second contribution to the Academy of the same year, 'The Dismissal of Cardinal Wolsey,' painted in a manner highly to be commended.

We were glad to meet Mr. Pott in a really joyous vein at the Academy in 1875; his 'Don Quixote at the Ball' is, as we recorded at the time, a right humorous composition, doing full justice to the passage of the romance which suggested it: "Among the ladies there were two of an arch and jocose disposition, who, though they were modest, behaved with more freedom than usual, and, to divert themselves and the rest, so plied Don Quixote with dancing that they worried both his soul and body. A sight it was indeed to behold his figure, long, lean,

lank, and swarthy, straitened in his clothes, so awkward, and with so little agility." Humour, but of a different kind, may be called the leading idea of the solitary picture this artist sent last year to the Academy, 'HIS HIGHNESS IN DISGRACE'; it is engraved here. The young prince listens to the lecture of his cardinal confessor with anything but an air of contrition for whatever offence he may have committed; while his mother, we presume it is, watches him with loving solicitude, and her attendants look on, more amused than they dare show at the boyish indifference of the royal juvenile.

Mr. Pott is still a young man comparatively; his works hitherto evidence talent of an order to justify the expectation that he may before very long make his name prominently known as an historical painter, conferring honour on our school.

JAMES DAFFORNE.

GILDING ON PORCELAIN.



ANY process which brings the artistic and decorative effects of the more costly processes of ornamentation of objects of domestic use within the reach of the mass of the people, and combines good workmanship and durability with economy of production, is a gain to the industrial Arts and a boon to the public. If, however, it descends to the region of "shams," and is more pretentious than real, it is the reverse of this, however ingenious or apparently economical it may be. True economy involves reality and durability, and in the transfer process of gold ornaments to porcelain, which we have recently had the privilege of examining at the works of Messrs. Powell and Bishop, of Hanley, Staffordshire Potteries, there can be no doubt these elements exist, in combination with a facility for the decoration of porcelain in an artistic and effective manner, which cannot fail to be appreciated when it is properly understood. We purpose, then, to make our readers acquainted with the nature and advantages of this gilding process, which has not received the attention to which its merits entitle it, since it has now stood the test of some fifteen years' experience as to its permanence; for the process has been in operation in Messrs. Powell and Bishop's works since 1860. Unfortunately for its immediate success, the earlier examples were brought into the market just at the time when a French process for effecting the transfer of gold to porcelain had, from the want of permanence in the result, created a great prejudice in the minds of the principal dealers in modern porcelain, against transfer gilding, and the really permanent and effective method of the English manufacturer has suffered in the estimation of buyers from this cause. Time, however, has brought its full evidence of durability, as nothing but time and experience can do in such cases; and it is now desirable that all persons interested in modern ceramic Art should know of and understand so admirable and economical a method of embellishing porcelain.

The ordinary process of gilding on porcelain is by applying with a pencil or brush the prepared gold, mixed with a proper flux, to the surface of the body to be decorated. Of course, this is done by the hand of an Art-workman, and is dependent upon his skill and dexterity in reproducing the lines and masses of the design prepared for the decoration of the object under ornamentation, be it cup, saucer, plate, or vase. Of course, to produce good gilding, a proper quantity of the precious metal must be conveyed by the pencil or brush of the artist to the surface of the porcelain, so that, when fired, it will stand the action of the burnisher, or other after-processes by acid, &c., according to the de-

tails of the design selected. The repetition of a very intricate ornament by this hand-process is, therefore, a most costly operation, and is rarely attempted, and gold is generally used more or less as supplementary to colour. By the process of Messrs. Powell and Bishop all this is changed, and the most delicate and intricate designs and repetitions can be produced, colour being used to supplement the effect of the gold. In short, the method is analogous to that by which an engraved design is transferred in vitreous colour to a ceramic body. The French process, already referred to, was based mechanically upon the ordinary transfer process, and therefore the breadth of effect had to be produced by fine lines, practically conveying a minimum of gold to the surface of the porcelain, so that in all probability the gold itself is disintegrated either in the process of firing or of burnishing, and when the decorated vessels come to be applied to their proper use the gilding quickly disappears.

The ordinary process of "transfer gilding" is to transfer an oil surface to the ware, and then apply the gold in the form of a powder, the oil taking up a sufficient quantity of the metal to produce a surface of gold capable of being burnished. This, however, has never been considered really satisfactory.

In the process under consideration we have a totally different result. The gold is transferred from the absorbent paper, on which it is printed ready for transfer, in a compact body, every atom of it being conveyed to the porcelain. The masses are as solid as if wrought with the pencil or brush; and, considering the pressure used by the hand of the operator in the course of the transfer, we are inclined to the belief that the gold must of necessity adhere to the porcelain surface in a more compact mass than it can possibly be conveyed by the point of the pencil or brush. At all events, when fired it presents a most unmistakable and solid surface of dead gold to the action of the burnisher, but certainly does not burnish so smoothly as pencil gold.

Artistically, the examples inspected at the works of Messrs. Powell and Bishop were generally excellent and tasteful. The temptation to exuberant gilding, always a mistake, has been fairly resisted. As a matter of course, the repetitions of the borders are of the most perfect character, there being practically no limit to the design except the taste and skill of the designer; and patterns which would have been simply impossible to produce by hand, unless at an enormous expenditure of time on the part of an expert gilder, are among the ordinary designs used by this process; but over-ornamentation, especially for high-class demand, is a danger to be guarded against.